DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 450 899 PS 029 241

AUTHOR Alexander, Diane; Cove, Moya
TITLE Learning Is Magic: Supporting Adults in Assessing Children's Progress 3-5 [with Videotape]. Early Education Support Series.
INSTITUTION Learning and Teaching Scotland, Dundee.
ISBN ISBN-1-85955-684-1
PUB DATE 2000-00-00
NOTE 75p.; For related guides, see PS 028 472-473 and PS 029 234-243. Videotape not available from ERIC.
AVAILABLE FROM Sales Department, Learning and Teaching Scotland, Gardyne Road, Dundee DD5 1NY, Scotland; Tel: 01382-443600; Fax: 01382-443645/6; e-mail: enquiries@LTScotland.com; Web site: http://www.LTScotland.com (Order code: JFJ, 22.50 British Pounds Sterling, including VAT, plus 2.50 shipping).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Non-Print Media (100)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Evaluation Methods; Foreign Countries; Leaders Guides; Preschool Children; *Preschool Education; *Preschool Teachers; *Professional Development; *Staff Development; *Student Evaluation; Videotape Recordings
IDENTIFIERS Scotland

ABSTRACT

This staff development guide with accompanying videotape is designed to assist early years staff using "A Curriculum Framework for Children 3 to 5" in Scotland to assess children's progress. The program is comprised of activities to stimulate discussion among colleagues, affirm existing good practice, give time for reflection, and challenge assumptions. The program is based on four guiding principles of a quality early years educational experience as outlined in the curriculum: (1) the central importance of relationships; (2) the need for all children to feel included; (3) an understanding of the ways in which children learn; and (4) the best interests of children. The introductory section of the guide contains information on the group leader role, suggestions for working with groups, preparation suggestions, and suggestions for using the training materials. Fifteen staff development activities are then delineated in five areas: (1) observation and assessment during staff interaction; (2) recording to summarize success and progress; (3) reporting to promote partnerships; (4) planning for effective learning; and (5) transition to school. Each activity includes information on the time required, activity focus, and preparation and resource needs. Also included are reproducible activity sheets and handouts. The script for the accompanying videotape is appended. Featuring sequences shot at a number of early years centers, the 44-minute videotape consists of five main sections corresponding to the above training areas and an introductory sequence that highlights the key principles of a quality early years educational experience. Timings delineated in the development guide indicate where each section can be found. (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 450 899

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

EARLY EDUCATION SUPPORT

Learning is Magic

Supporting adults in assessing children's progress 3–5

PS 029241

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Tegwen R. Wallace
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
2A
2

scottish CCC

Learning is Magic

Supporting adults in assessing children's progress 3–5

Diane Alexander
Moya Cove

First published 2000

© Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum 2000

ISBN 1 85955 684 1

Contents

Acknowledgements iv

Introduction 1

Support for group leaders 3

Guide to using the pack 7

1. Observation and assessment during staff interaction 9
Activity 1: observation and assessment during staff interaction – an overview 10
Activity 2: two boys sharing a book/emergent literacy 14
Handout for Activity 2 17
Activity 3: two boys sharing a book/environment 18
Activity 4: hopscotch 22

2. Recording: summarising success and progress 25
Activity 5: recording – an overview 26
Handout for Activity 5 29
Activity 6: discussion on Emma 30
Activity 7: looking at folios 34
Activity 8: looking at folios/management 38

3. Reporting to promote partnerships 41
Activity 9: reporting – an overview 42
Activity 10: reporting – Jonathan discussion 46

4. Planning for effective learning 49
Activity 11: planning – an overview 50
Activity 12: building-site discussion 54
Activity 13: planning for individual needs 58
Activity 14: Wiggly Woo 62

5. Moving Along 65
Activity 15: Moving Along – practitioners talking 66

And in conclusion ... 69

Appendix 1: Moving Along transcript 70

Appendix 2: video script 73

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Acknowledgements

The production team would like to thank the children, staff and parents of the following centres for all their involvement in this project, for their support and for making us all feel so welcome. Thank you.

Barrhead Community Nursery
Eaglesham Playgroup
Francis Wright Centre
Foggyley Nursery School
Hazeldene Nursery School
Hollandbush Nursery
Lochee Primary School
The Bruce Nursery
Westfield Court Nursery School

This pack of staff development materials is the result of practitioners from many different settings working together to produce *Learning is Magic*. Without their collaboration, their contributions, their comments, their encouragement and their constant good humour this pack would look very different.

Video consultants

Diane Alexander, Development Fellow, Scottish CCC
Moya Cove, Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Glasgow
Vicky Devlin, Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Glasgow
Myra Reid, Quality Development Officer, East Renfrewshire

Video production team from the University of Glasgow

David Collins
David McGonigle
Carol McGrouther
John Traynor

Writing team

Ruth Boddie, Area Manager, Scottish Pre-school Play Association, (SPPA)
Stella Brown, Head of Nursery, The Mary Erskine and Stewart's Melville Junior School (SCIS)
Margo Butcher, Headteacher, Hollandbush Nursery School, South Lanarkshire.
Juliet Hancock, Lecturer in Early Years Education, Stirling Centre for Further Education
Inez Murray, Manager, Four Seasons Nursery, (SINA)
Myra Reid, Quality Development Officer, East Renfrewshire
Moya Cove, Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Glasgow
Diane Alexander, Development Fellow, Scottish CCC

The editors also acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of the following people.

Ian Barr, Director, Scottish CCC
Louise Hayward, Associate Dean, Faculty of Education University of Glasgow
Dr Jim McGonigal, Head of Language and Literature, Faculty of Education, University of Glasgow
Chris McIlroy, HMI
The Early Education Reference Group
Jill Mathieson, Departmental Secretary, Scottish CCC
Tom Sanderson, Head of Technical Services, University of Glasgow
Satinder Ahluwalia, TGS Productions

Introduction

Why has this pack been developed?

This pack has been developed to help all those who work with young children to come to a clearer appreciation of the processes involved in assessing children's progress 3 to 5.

It has been written at a time when the whole issue of assessment of children's learning is under review. Whatever the outcome of that review, it is essential that all those who have a responsibility for assessing children's progress deepen their understanding of the nature and purpose of assessment and work together to improve their skills in observation, recording, reporting and planning.

The materials have been developed in collaboration with practitioners from a wide range of different early years settings in response to feedback from the consultation on *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5*. During the consultation many practitioners took the opportunity to request additional support and guidance on Section 3 of The Framework, Promoting Effective Learning.

What do we mean by assessment?

When we work with young children, when we talk to them and listen to what they tell us, when we watch them as they play, we are observing an awesome process. We are watching them learn.

It is as we think about what we see and try to understand it, that we embark on the process of assessment. As we recognise children's achievements and record them and as we share our understandings with others we can begin to use our assessments to identify what children could learn next. This also helps us to see how we can develop our curriculum and the experiences we offer to children so that we can support and extend that learning.

> *Assessment should be an integral part of the daily routine in an early years setting. It occurs as adults listen, watch and interact with a child or group of children.*
>
> *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5, p. 45*

Who is the pack intended for?

This pack is intended to support early years practitioners working together as a team.

All the activities in this pack are designed to:

- stimulate discussion among colleagues
- affirm existing good practice
- give time for reflection
- challenge assumptions

and to encourage the staff as a team to take a closer look at existing policies and practices within their centre. The activities also aim to develop practitioners' confidence to try out different ways of assessing children's progress in the early years.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What are the principles that guide us?

The pack does not suggest that there is only one acceptable set of practices in assessment but for assessment to be worthwhile and to make a difference to the quality of children's learning experiences it must be grounded in a set of principles that are shared by all those involved in the process.

This pack is based on the four guiding principles of a quality early years educational experience as outlined in *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3 - 5*.

The central importance of relationships

As we make judgements about young children's progress in learning we need to take account of the central importance of relationships as the basis on which all learning takes place. We need to pay attention to all aspects of their development and learning. It is as important to record the extent to which children can form positive relationships and friendships as it is to record their achievements in recognising familiar words and letters.

The need for all children to feel included

Assessment needs to be respectful of all children whatever their gifts, their cultural heritage, their language or their special learning needs. At all times children need to feel secure, to feel valued and to have a sense of belonging.

An understanding of the ways in which children learn

For our assessments to be effective we need to build on what we already know about the children's motivations, their interests and their preferred way of learning. Assessment should be based on our observations of what children say and what they do at different times of the day, in different situations. It should take account of all the ways in which children learn through investigating, through watching, through questioning, through talk and through play.

The best interests of children

Assessment is a process that must work in the best interests of children. It must enhance their lives and support and extend their development and learning.

Why 'Learning is Magic'?

The title for this pack of materials was inspired by the two little boys you will see at the beginning of each section.

For them as for all children each day is filled with amazement as they learn about themselves, about the world around them and their place in it and excitement as they discover that what once seemed impossible is now possible and within their reach.

This remarkable capacity for learning imposes an enormous responsibility on early years practitioners. The challenge for us is to ensure that we never lose sight of that amazement and wonder.

Learning should always be 'magic'.

Support for Group Leaders

Introduction

This section is intended to highlight areas for consideration when preparing for the role of group leader. It has been designed to provide support and reassurance for those whose opportunities for leading staff development may have been limited – and it is hoped that the notes offered will help in making full and confident use of the pack. It may also serve as a useful prompt for those who have had more experience in leading groups but wish to use it as a checklist before sessions.

This section explores some of the questions that you may have as a group leader and gives ideas and suggestions to help you think through your task. These questions are as follows:

- What is the role of the group leader?
- What should the group gain from the learning experience I lead?
- How should I prepare for the sessions?
- How can I ensure the sessions are stimulating and varied?

What is the role of the group leader?

The group leader's role is to support active learning through the provision of appropriate opportunities that will encourage the group to engage in a reflective process – to extend their thinking and learning.

The video and activities provided have been prepared to assist groups in this process and can act as a stimulus for reflecting on current practice. It is not the role of the group leader to impart information, to instruct or to give 'answers'. Identifying strategies and ways forward for any one group will depend on their own particular circumstances and needs and should evolve from the group's reflection. The group leader's role is to facilitate this learning process.

Some more specific aspects of the role to take in to account are as follows:

Working with the group

This involves:

- the need to recognise the expertise and experience that members will bring to the group and to consider how to build on this rich resource
- the need to encourage group members to feel good about participating and to value their observations, experience and ideas
- the need to encourage group members to look critically at what they do with young children and how practice might be enhanced
- the need to clarify issues for the group and ensure shared understandings
- the need to challenge the group to broaden their thinking and to consider new perspectives.

Working with a co-leader

Where possible, you might consider working with a co-leader to run the group sessions. Sharing the task has a number of advantages and the group will also benefit from having two leaders, both through the variety in presentation and through the experience of two different personality and leadership styles.

It will be important to ensure that both co-leaders are clear about the overall plan and about who will be taking responsibility for specific leader's tasks – introducing topics, leading group activities, conducting summary sessions, chairing and so on. Planning time will be essential to establish the pattern of working, practical considerations of all that is involved in preparation, the content of the sessions and clarification of responsibilities.

This way of working can be very enjoyable. More than that, it can be very supportive to have someone else to plan with, to co-deliver with and to review with. This can enhance the learning experience for leaders themselves as we inevitably gain valuable insights from working with others.

Challenging aspects of the group-leader role

The experience for the group should be a very positive one and it will be important to bear in mind how the group feels as it embarks on such an experience. By giving some thought to this it is possible to pre-empt some of the issues or challenges that might arise and to think about how you might handle them. These may include:

- the expectations that group members have which may differ widely – here it will be important to clarify the aims of the sessions to reduce the possibility of disappointment
- the different levels of confidence that group members might have, and how secure, or insecure, they may feel about participating – here it is important to respect how people feel and encourage participation when they feel ready, perhaps through pairs or small groups at first
- the tendency for groups to focus sometimes on negative aspects of topics – here it will be important to emphasise constructive points and positive comments and build on these.

What should the group gain from the learning experiences I lead?

The purpose in bringing the group together is to ensure that there are opportunities to share thinking and learning together. The group will be undergoing a process of learning that is essentially reflective in nature.

Through this process the group members should gain increased confidence and enhanced skills to enable them to review and further develop practice in the assessment of children's progress 3–5.

11

What should I prepare for the session?

The following notes are offered both to help you consider practical details for the sessions – and to help you collect your thoughts before leading the group.

Before the group sessions think of the following.

- Who are the audience and how many are there?
- Who will inform them or invite them?
- Where is the session to be held?
- What is the date and timing of the session?
- How best will the time be organised?
- How should the room be arranged and who will be responsible?
- What refreshments should I organise and who will be responsible?
- Do I need to organise any particular equipment (for example flip chart, stand and paper)?
- What planning and preparatory work do I need to do? (For example selecting and preparing appropriate sessions using the materials provided.)
- When beginning a series of sessions what 'ground rules' might I need to negotiate with the group? (For example establishing that all information shared in the group should be treated confidentially.)

Leading the session

Introduction to the session

It is important for the group members to feel included and willing to share in the experience ahead. They will also require a clear understanding of the purposes of the sessions and how they are going to run. In order to achieve this you should:

- ensure a good welcome and set a positive and inclusive 'climate'
- think of a short introductory activity to break the ice and allow people to begin to get to know each other – and put them at their ease (if working with a group whose members do not know each other)
- signal the content of the session by sharing the aim, and indicate the nature of the activities so that the group knows what to expect (for example by watching video extracts, workshops, etc.)

The main part of the session

The leader's notes provided in this pack will give you clear guidelines for each session. You may also wish to consider the following points to help you in your role as a group leader.

- Remember to keep an eye on the timing (it may be appropriate to allow the group members more time if they are engaged in valuable discussions, and you may have to re-plan your next session accordingly).
- Think through the activity you are leading and be ready to respond to any issues that may arise.
- Make sure that you are responsive to the concerns of the group through spending time listening and observing as they are engaged in the activities.
- Remember to take part in the activities yourself, as you have experience to share too.
- Keep the group 'on task', for example by moving the group on to the next part of the activity or by encouraging them to keep contributions relevant.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Finishing the session

It is important to make sure that you have enough time to finish the session to allow:

- an evaluation of what ground you have covered and whether the aim has been met
- what has been learnt
- time to look forward to the next session confirming arrangements and an outline of the content.

How can I ensure the sessions are stimulating and varied?

The sessions that are provided in the pack have been designed to support staff development in assessing children's progress 3–5. The activities include much discussion to promote reflection. You may wish to change the presentation and method of these discussion activities in order to vary the experience for the group members. The following notes are offered to give you some ideas.

- **'Post-its'**
  This is a good idea for brainstorming activities. Group members can write down ideas or identify issues and these can be displayed for everyone to see. Discussion can then take place and ideas can be shaped, categorised, refined and so on.
- **Statement games**
  These can be a good idea for stimulating discussion and clarifying thinking. It will be necessary to prepare a range of statements for groups to consider. These statements should be slightly provocative in nature to stimulate discussion and invite agreement, disagreement – or to identify uncertainties. Group members can then discuss their own views and move towards a more consensual (or a more informed) position.
- **Listening triad**
  This is good for ensuring that all have an opportunity to share their experience. It also helps in the development of active listening skills, questioning skills and summary reporting skills. Each member of the group of three takes on a different role:
  teller (who explains what they have done)
  questioner (who prompts and seeks clarification)
  recorder (who listens, makes notes and sums up)
- **Snowballing**
  This is good for helping a group to think through priorities. In pairs first, members are asked to identify three issues. Having decided on their issues they are then asked to join with (or 'snowball') another pair. Now they have six issues to consider and must discuss these and boil it down again to three. This will help to ensure prioritisation. You may keep snowballing the pairs if you wish to.
- **Case studies**
  To provide a very specific focus for discussion you may, when appropriate, provide a short case study to help the group relate the activity to a real situation or a real child.

13

Guide to using the pack

The video and accompanying staff development materials have been designed to be used selectively and in any order to meet the needs of different practitioners working in different contexts.

The activities can be used in short informal sessions when staff members have the opportunity to come together or can be clustered to provide a more substantial in-service programme.

The role of the group leader is crucial to how the pack is used. Each activity begins with detailed notes for the group leader and the previous section, Support for Group Leaders, contains additional guidance on organisation and management.

At the end of the pack you will find a list of additional ideas for staff development activities in the section entitled: And in conclusion ...

The video itself consists of five main sections and an introductory sequence that highlights the key principles of a quality early years educational experience as set out in *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5*, p. 2.

At the end of each section you will be invited to 'take a closer look' at extended video sequences and time has been allowed for you to stop and rewind in order to see each of the sequences again.

The following timings indicate where each of the main sections of the video can be found as well as where each 'take a closer look' starts and finishes.

The timings are as accurate as we can make them but you may find that the readings on your video counter are slightly different. The variations should not be significant and we hope the timings will enable you to find the selected sequence with a minimum of fuss.

- Introduction (Principles) 0137–0341 (3 min. 25 s)

- Observation and assessment during staff interaction

Main section	0341–0700 (6 min.)
TACL two boys sharing a book	0700–0750 (51 s)
TACL hopscotch	0750–0847 (1 min. 38 s)

- Recording

Main section	0847–1020 (2 min. 54 s)
TACL discussion on Emma	1020–1104 (1 min. 25 s)
TACL looking at folios	1104–1157 (54 s)

- Reporting

Main section	1157–1438 (4 min. 42 s)
TACL Jonathan discussion	1438–1550 (1 min. 53 s)

- Planning

Main section	1550–1845 (4 min. 56 s)
TACL building-site discussion	1845–1937 (1 min. 33 s)
TACL planning for individual needs	1937–2106 (2 min. 50 s)
TACL Wiggly Woo	2106–2248 (2 min. 23 s)

- Moving along 2248–2757 (8 min. 30 s)

- End of video 2930 (43 min. 54 s)

Throughout this pack reference is made to two publications:

- *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5*
- *Promoting Learning – Assessing Children's Progress 3–5*.

These publications should already be in your centre.
Additional copies can be obtained from:

Scottish CCC
Gardyne Road
Broughty Ferry
DUNDEE
DD5 1NY
Tel: 01382 443600
Fax: 01382 443645/6

E-mail: reception@sccc.ac.uk
Web: www.sccc.ac.uk

Observation and assessment during staff interaction

Aims

These are:

- to enhance skills in gathering important information about children's development and learning through observation
- to highlight the importance of taking action, as a result of observations, to support or challenge children's learning.

It is from observation and assessment of children at play that we learn how and what they learn.

A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5, p. 47

21 16

16

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Recording: summarising success and progress

Aims

These are:

- to highlight the importance of developing a profile of each child's progress over time
- to enhance skills in recording that are both manageable and useful.

Day-to-day records of observations and assessments help staff to plan learning experiences that take account of children's needs and development. Records should also provide a profile of each child's progress in different aspects of their development and learning. Profiles will provide the information required to report to parents, colleagues and other professionals.

A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5, p. 48

25

30

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Activity 1: observation and assessment during staff interaction – an overview

Time

- about an hour and a half

Focus

- to raise awareness of the opportunities for adults to enhance and extend the learning experiences through interacting with children in their play

Preparation and resources

- transcript of script (optional)
- photocopy enough activity sheets for the group
- flip chart and pens

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to raise awareness of the opportunities for adults to enhance and extend the learning experience through interacting with children in their play. It will be important to emphasise that the main consideration is staff interaction.

Show the video section 'Observation and Staff Interaction' once before issuing the activity sheets and handouts.

Show the video extract again and remind the group that the focus is staff interaction. Ask each pair to make notes of the staff interactions they have observed and discuss:

- the range of interactions
- the different levels of interactions.

At this point it might be necessary to show the video section again. Allow about ten minutes for paired discussion.

Bring the group together and on a flip chart invite them to identify when and why different types of interaction might be appropriate. At this point the discussion should be general rather than focused on any one particular sequence.

Move on to the second activity. Tell the group you are going to show the section again and ask them to concentrate on the hospital scene. Invite them, again in pairs, to do part two of the activity. Some of the group might find this sequence controversial and it will be necessary for you to be sensitive to this. Ensure that the focus is on why the adult might have decided to interact in this way and how she might then extend the learning experience.

The final part of this activity looks at occasions when the adult might decide to observe children at play without actually engaging in the learning experience.

Ask the group to watch the video for the last time and to identify any sequences where the adult is present but not involved in the children's play.

As a whole group discuss how this decision might impact on the learning experience, for example on:

- relationships
- confidence
- security (support available if required)
- independence.

Activity 1: observation and assessment during staff interaction – an overview

In pairs:

1. As you watch this video section make a note of the staff interactions you observe.

Discuss this range of staff interactions with your partner and consider the different levels of staff interaction that you have observed.

2. Take another look at this section, focus on the hospital scene and consider the following:

- Why might the adult have chosen to interact in this way?

- How might she extend this learning experience for the two boys?

3. Are there any examples where an adult is present but not actively engaged with the children?

- How might her decision not to engage actively with the children impact on their learning experience?

Activity 2: two boys sharing a book/emergent literacy

Time

- about an hour and a half

Focus

- to emphasise the importance of taking action as a result of evidence from observation
- to focus specifically on aspects of emergent literacy

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets for the group
- photocopy enough handouts for the group
- flip-chart and pens

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to emphasise the importance of taking action as a result of evidence from observation. In this activity there will be a focus on the development of Communication and Language and, more specifically, on aspects of emergent literacy.

Show the video extract once before issuing the activity. Show the video extract again and remind the group that the focus is Communication and Language. Ask the group members to make notes from their observations individually and then to share these notes with a partner.

Distribute the handout 'Communication and Language' from *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5*. Allow them a few minutes to look over the handout and then show the video again and ask them to check their observations to identify any features that they might have omitted. Allow a little time for the pairs to discuss this.

Bring the group together and note all the contributions on the flip chart. Pin this sheet on the wall.

Now invite the group to think about this list *in* relationship to emergent literacy. This narrows the focus from the broad area of Communication and Language to the specific focus for the second part of the activity.

On a fresh flip-chart sheet ask the group to identify some of the different aspects of emergent literacy and write these up as sub-headings on the flip chart. If you think the group is uncertain about this you could prepare the flip-chart page beforehand with sub-headings, such as:

- story experience, for example:
  - his awareness of audience
  - his intonation and expression

- environmental print (there is no explicit evidence here)
- phonological awareness, for example:
  - his attempt to provide a rhyming word for 'monster'

- concepts of print
  - his familiarity of books and how to use them
  - following the words from left to right.

Now, still with the whole group, ask them to cluster the aspects of emergent literacy from their list on the wall. Draw attention to the aspects of emergent literacy that the boy demonstrates he can do already. For example, phonological awareness – and the evidence that tells us this in the video extract.

Now invite the group to go back in to their pairs and ask them to do part two of the activity. To conclude, draw the group members together again and invite their suggestions on next steps and how they will take this forward. Discuss these with the whole group.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Activity 2: two boys sharing a book/emergent literacy

Individually:

1. As you watch the video sequence, make a note of as many different features of the boy's learning as you can. (Remember the focus is on Communication and Language.)

Now share your observations with a partner.

2. From your discussions, consider:

- the next step in learning for the boy

- how you might plan to take this forward.

Handout for Activity 2

In communication and language, children should learn to:

- have fun with language and making stories
- listen to other children and adults during social activities and play
- listen with enjoyment and respond to stories, songs, music, rhymes and other poetry
- listen and respond to the sounds and rhythm of words in stories, songs, music and rhymes
- pay attention to information and instruction from an adult
- talk to other children or with an adult about themselves and their experiences
- express needs, thoughts and feelings with increasing confidence in speech and non-verbal language
- take part in short and more extended conversations
- use talk during role play and re-tell a story or rhyme
- use language for a variety of purposes, for example to describe, explain, predict, ask questions and develop ideas
- use books to find interesting information
- recognise the link between the written and spoken word
- understand some of the language and layout of books
- develop an awareness of letter names and sounds in the context of play experiences
- use their own drawings and written marks to express ideas and feelings
- experiment with symbols, letters and, in some cases, words in writing
- recognise some familiar words and letters, for example the initial letter in their name.

A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5, p.16

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Activity 3: two boys sharing a book/environment

Time

- about an hour

Focus

- to consider the impact of the environment on children's learning
- to enhance the group's skills in selecting and maintaining a focus for observation

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets
- flip chart and pens

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to encourage staff to consider, through their *focused* observations, how the environment can impact on children's learning. It will be important to emphasise that the main consideration for this observation is the learning environment.

Show the video extract once before issuing the activities.

Show the video extract again and remind the group that the focus is the learning environment. Ask the group members to make notes from their observations individually and then to share these notes with a partner. Ask each pair to discuss the similarities and the differences in their observations.

You may find that the group will begin to discuss other issues. If you allow them to do this for a short time this will give you an opportunity to remind them how difficult it can be to keep a tight focus in observation.

Reassemble the group and note all the contributions on a flip chart. Remember to acknowledge the importance of any differences in their responses and to stress the possible significance of these for all your observation work.

As a result of sharing their observations the group needs to be encouraged to become more aware of the importance of the environment in enhancing particular aspects of learning, including personal and social development. This sequence is helpful in highlighting the centrality of feelings and emotions in learning.

Some of the aspects that the group may identify as a result of their second discussion are:

- comfort
- safety and security
- relationships
- attitudes
- independence
- interaction
- confidence
- enjoyment

To conclude this activity, agree on the key issues and list them on a flip chart.

Following on from this, you may wish to ask the group to take a closer look at their own environment and how it impacts on learning and relationships.

Some members of the [illegible] to look at particular aspects of the environment – for example, the book corner, the home corner or the cloakroom.

Activity 3: two boys sharing a book/environment

1. As you watch the video sequence, make a note of as many different features of the environment as you can. (You should do this individually.)

Now share your observations about the environment with a partner.

2. From your discussions, consider how this particular environment has contributed to:
   - the boys' learning

   - how the boys might feel about learning

   - the quality of the relationship between the boys.

Activity 4: Hopscotch

Time

- about an hour

Focus

- to raise awareness of opportunities for observation outwith planned learning experiences

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets for the group
- flip-chart and pens

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to raise awareness of opportunities for observation outwith planned learning experiences.

Show the video extract once before issuing the activity. Tell the staff that this sequence was captured almost by chance by the video team. The video team was outside taking a break when some of the children came out to play.

Hand out the activity sheets and invite the group, at first individually, to identify as many different features of the girls' learning as they can.

Show the video again and ask them to share their findings with a partner. Reassemble the group and make a flip chart of all the features they have identified. It is likely that the features they identify will be mostly focusing on numeracy.

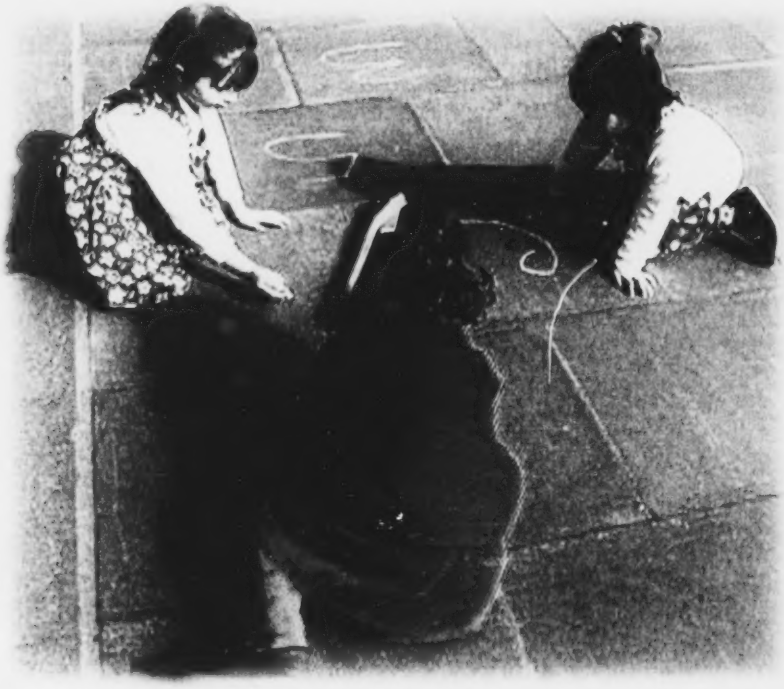
Now ask the group to cluster the features under the key aspects of learning as outlined in *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5*.

At this point the group may wish to see the video again. As a group, now identify any additional features of learning and draw attention to the range of features across all aspects of development and learning.

Some of the features identified may be:

- cooperation with others
- developing an awareness of space
- enjoying energetic activity outdoors
- taking turns
- sharing resources.

Remind the group about the context in which the learning was observed and ask them to consider contexts within their own centre where valuable evidence may not be noticed, and how you might include unplanned opportunities within your observation schedule.



Activity 4: Hopscotch

Individually:

1. As you watch the video sequence, make a note of as many different features of the girls' learning as you can.

Now discuss these with a partner to share your observations.

2. As a result of the group discussion identify any additional features of learning.

3. How can you ensure that valuable oppo:tunities for collecting evidence about children's learning are not missed?

Activity 5: recording – an overview

Time

- about 45 minutes

Focus

- to consider a range of methods for recording children's learning

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets for the group
- read the section on recording in: *Promoting Learning*
- photocopy enough handouts for the group

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to raise awareness of different methods of recording and to consider how useful and manageable these methods might be within your own centre.

Show the main section of the video on recording once before issuing the activities.

Give out the activity sheets and ask the group to work individually at first and then in pairs to identify and list the different methods of recording. The group may wish to view this section again.

You may wish to bring the whole group together before part three of the activity. Invite each pair to comment briefly on their findings. Lead the whole group in a discussion on the nature and purpose of recording within their own centre. You may wish to refer to the Key Principles of Recording here. Ensure that the emphasis is on recording that is not only useful but manageable.

Following on from this you may wish to invite some members of the group to try out different methods of recording and to report back at a later stage.

Activity 5: recording – an overview

Individually:

1. As you watch the video make notes of all the different methods of recording that you see.

In pairs:

1. Make a list of the different methods of recording currently used in your own centre and discuss these with your partner.

2. Identify the methods that you have found to be particularly useful and manageable in your own centre.

3. How effective are these methods in meeting the key purposes of recording outlined in the handout?

Handout for Activity 5

Recording: the key principles

Key purposes of recording

Recording will serve the following key purposes.

- To develop a profile of each child's progress over time in each of the key aspects of development and learning.
- As a prompt for staff to take some action, for example to develop an activity further over the next few days or to plan next steps for learning and teaching over a longer period.
- To support learning and teaching by encouraging teamwork and sharing success with staff, parents and children, motivating them and developing their sense of self-worth.

The focus of recording

Observation and recording should focus on:

- the priorities for learning that have been identified at the planning stage
- other significant aspects that emerge, which staff observe during play, for example where a child or group of children demonstrate an interest, a skill or need for support in an aspect that was not included in the current plan
- gaps in information needed about a child, for example, if a profile shows that little is known about the child's interests or skills in music making.

Promoting Learning: Assessing Children's Progress 3–5, p. 21

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Activity 6: discussion on Emma

Time

- about one hour

Focus

- to raise awareness of the importance of staff discussion in contributing to a profile of a child's progress in different aspects of her development and learning

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets for the group
- flip chart, paper and pens

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to highlight the importance of group contributions to a record of children's progress. The focus of this discussion will be the 'Emma' sequence that you may wish to show several times.

Show the video sequence before issuing the activity.

Divide the staff into small groups and allow them to consider the questions in their own time. This will give you the opportunity to move between the groups and to point up some of the following issues.

- The staff member who says: *as I remember* .... What are the implications of relying on memory?
- How discussions such as these can trigger important insights in to learning.
- What other evidence can be recorded alongside Emma's progress in early literacy?

Bring the group together and share key findings from the discussion. Following on from this you may wish to ask the group members how they would then plan to take Emma's learning forward.

35

Activity 6: discussion on Emma

In small groups:
Consider the following questions based on the staff discussion. You may wish to make some notes.

- How did the staff discussion enhance the profile of Emma's learning?

- How did the adult report that she interacted with the child?

- How might the adult have recorded evidence of Emma's early literacy development?

- Who else could contribute to this discussion?

Activity 7: looking at folios

Time

- about one hour

Focus

- to consider ways in which a child's folio can contribute to a record of progress over a period of time
- to highlight the importance of the child's involvement in the process

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets for the group

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to highlight the importance of children's involvement in recording and discussing achievements. This activity is based on discussion of the sequence 'Looking at folios'.

Divide the staff in small groups and give out the activity sheets before viewing the sequence for the first time. Allow the groups enough time to consider each of the three points and to note down key issues from their discussions. Circulate amongst the groups and join in discussion where appropriate.

At a suitable point draw the group together and make a flip chart of the key issues to emerge from the discussions. These may include:

- building relationships
- friendships
- language development
- self-esteem
- confidence
- self-assessment
- peer-assessment
- recognition of progress
- interests.

To conclude this activity you may wish to take a closer look at the opportunities you provide for children in your own centre to share in the recording process and discuss their achievements.

Activity 7: looking at folios

In small groups:
Consider how the process of building up a folio over time can contribute to children's understanding of their own learning. You may wish to consider:

- the decisions made in selecting pieces of work

- the value of children sharing achievement

- the importance of encouraging children to reflect on their work

- children's deepening awareness of themselves as learners.

40

Activity 8: looking at folios/management

Time

- about one hour

Focus

- to clarify issues relating to the nature and purpose of creating of folios
- to consider practical ways of managing folios

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets for the group
- flip-chart and pens
- read through the section, 'Folios' in *Promoting Learning*, p. 25 (optional)

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to ensure a shared understanding of the purpose of using a folio to gather evidence about a child's learning and to consider practical ways of managing folios.

Begin this session by brainstorming perceptions of the purpose of building up a folio. List these on a flip chart. Possible responses may include:

- collecting children's work
- tracking progress
- involving parents and all staff to reflect on children's strengths and development needs
- recording achievement.

From this brainstorm you need to clarify why it is important to build on children's work. The outcome of this discussion is to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the purpose of folios as a way of gathering evidence of children's learning.

Now show the video section on recording and direct the group's attention to the part where we see a staff member with a group of children and their folios. Invite them to work through parts one and two of the activity.

Bring the group together and make a list of all that might be included in a folio. Once again reminding them of the purpose. These could include:

- photographs
- drawings
- emergent writing
- notes about something the child has particularly enjoyed.

Stress that the folios should include examples that show progress across all aspects of learning. This raises issues about the organisation of folios and how they need to be reviewed from time to time in order to make them not only meaningful but also manageable. To conclude this session ask staff to consider how folios are organised and managed within your centre and whether there might be a need to review existing arrangements.

Activity 8: looking at folios/management

Individually:

1. As you watch the video sequence make a note of all that you see included in the children's folios.

In pairs:

2. Keeping the purpose of a folio in mind what else should be included?

3. As a group, consider:
   - how effective your current arrangements are for the organisation and management of folios
   - whether your current system meets the agreed purpose of a folio.

Reporting to promote partnerships

Aim

This is:

- to highlight the importance of sharing information with all those involved in the child's development learning

Reporting is a means of promoting partnership with parents and of sharing information with children, colleagues and other professionals, and determining the next steps in learning.

A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5, p . 49

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Activity 9: reporting: an overview

Time

- about an hour

Focus

- to consider the range of adults who we share information with on an informal basis and any possible implications arising from this

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets
- flip-chart and pens

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to raise awareness of the many different adults with whom we share information on an informal basis. It will be important to draw out of the discussion the changing nature of families and working patterns – and that for many children the daily point of contact will not necessarily be the parent.

Show the video extract on reporting once before issuing the activity sheet. Invite the groups to work through parts one and two of the activity. Allow them about twenty minutes.

Reassemble the whole group and note on flip-chart key matters arising from the discussion. These might include issues such as:

- the detail of information that it is appropriate to share (for example, where a neighbour is involved)
- confidentiality where it might be an issue
- the frequency of contact and relationships with staff.

Still with the whole group shift the focus from the video to your own centre. Engage the staff in a discussion of ways in which you can be sure that lines of communication between home and centre are kept open and active, for example:

- telephone conversations
- parent evenings
- open mornings.

It will be important to remind the staff that sharing information is a two-way process and opportunities for parents to initiate contact with the centre should be encouraged and developed.

Activity 9: reporting – an overview

In small groups:

1. Think about the adults who drop off and collect children from your centre and make a list.

2. What implications might this have for the nature of the information shared?

   Discuss this in small groups.

3. What strategies could you put in place to ensure that there is ongoing communication between home and centre? Make a note of these below.

Activity 10: reporting – Jonathan discussion

Time

- about 45 minutes

Focus

- to take a closer look at ways in which parents can become more actively involved in the reporting process

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets
- Flip-chart and pens

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to encourage staff to consider how parents might become more actively involved in the reporting process.

Show the video sequence before issuing the activity.

Invite the group to work in pairs and stress that they should focus on what the parent and staff member have to say about Jonathan's development and learning.

Show the video sequence again – this time ask the pairs to focus on what we learn about the relationship between the parent and the staff member. Bring the group together to share their ideas. These may include:

- trust
- confidence
- feeling valued
- empathy
- sharing insights.

Establish that this relationship has developed over time and has a strong foundation. Also establish the importance of developing such relationships with parents.

Keeping the group together, spend a few minutes identifying ways in which the parent might be encouraged to contribute more on a day-to-day basis. Write up the group's ideas on a flip-chart. Now move the discussion away from the video sequence to examine ways in which, as staff members, you involve parents in the reporting process.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Activity 10: reporting – Jonathan discussion

In pairs:

1. As you watch the video sequence identify the contributions that the staff member and the parent make to the discussion about Jonathan's learning.

   Parent | Staff member

2. What do we learn about the relationship between the parent and the staff member? Discuss this with your partner.

3. Following on from this, how might the parent be encouraged to contribute more information about Jonathan on a day-to-day basis?

4. Consider the ways in which you include parents in the reporting process in your own centre.

Planning for effective learning

Aims

These are:

- to highlight the importance of a team approach in planning
- to raise awareness of the need to adapt plans in response to children's particular needs, interests and motivation.

Effective planning establishes clear goals for learning that are designed to match the needs and achievements of children. Planning, whether long or short term should leave staff clear, confident and well prepared for what they are trying to achieve in children's learning.

A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5, p. 46

51

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Activity 11: planning – an overview

Time

- about 1 hour

Focus

- to encourage staff to take a closer look at all the issues that need to be addressed to ensure that planning is effective

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets
- flip-chart and pens
- copies of the script (optional)

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to enable staff to take a closer look at the planning process and to identify the key features that are central to effective planning.

You may wish to refer to the sections on planning in *Promoting Learning* and *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5*.

Show the video section on planning before handing out the activity sheets.

Divide the staff into small groups but ask them first to work on their own.

Now show the video section again and ask the groups to work through parts one and two of the activity sheet. Allow enough time for discussion.

Now bring the whole group together and record their responses on the flip chart. Some of these may be:

- flexibility
- responsive
- time
- individual needs
- evaluation
- team work
- balance of activities
- breadth of experiences
- clear learning intentions.

If any of the above has been omitted you may wish to add it and to initiate a discussion on why that particular feature is important.

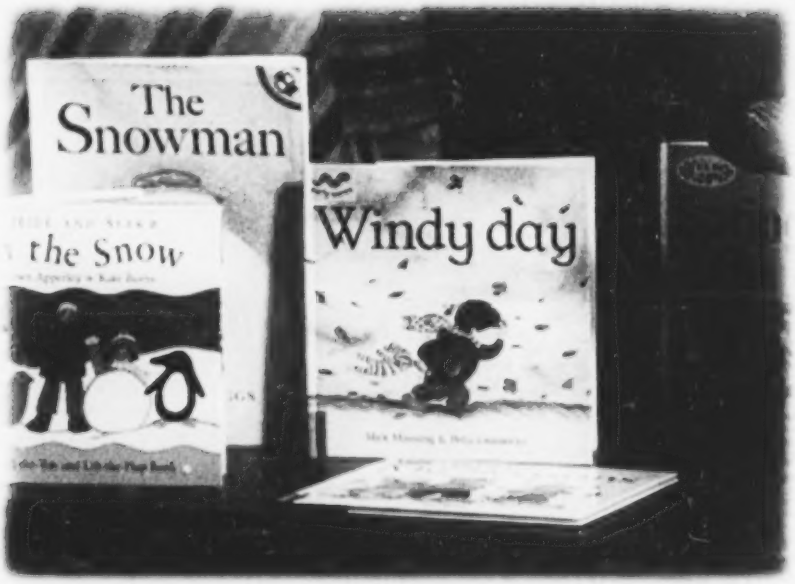
Now ask the groups to choose three of the features of effective planning and to consider their impact on:

- children's learning
- making teaching manageable.

Allow time for discussion and then bring the group together to share their findings.

It would be interesting to ask each group why they chose the particular three features and to note any similarities and differences between group choices.

End the session by emphasising the importance of all the features of effective planning. As a follow up you may wish to ask the staff members to take a closer look at their own planning process to see how many of the key features are evident.



Activity 11: planning – an overview

Individually:

1. As you watch the video section on planning make a note of the key features of effective planning that are mentioned.

Now share your findings with the group.

2. Take a closer look at the list and add any additional features you think are important.

3. Now choose three key features of effective planning and identify how each of the features impacts on
   - children's learning

   - making teaching more manageable.

Activity 12: building-site discussion

Time

- about 1 hour 15 minutes

Focus

- to consider how a particular approach to responsive planning could be developed to incorporate opportunities for investigation and problem solving

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets
- flip-chart and pens.

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to encourage staff to consider the value of responsive planning with a particular focus on opportunities for investigation and problem solving.

Show the video sequence once to allow the staff members some time to appreciate the context for the discussion and the need for responsive planning.

Give out the activity sheets and remind the group that the focus is on opportunities for investigation and problem solving.

Show the sequence again.

Ask the groups to work through the activity sheet and allow an appropriate amount of time for discussion and note taking.

Some of the areas that the groups might choose are:

- weight
- measurement
- texture
- structures
- machinery
- sequencing
- materials.

Bring the groups back together and record their ideas on the flip-chart.

Now ask the groups to choose one of the opportunities for learning from each of their lists and outline briefly how they might plan to take each opportunity forward.

After an appropriate amount of time bring the groups back to share their ideas.

Now invite the whole group to brainstorm additional opportunities for learning across all aspects of the curriculum.

Conclude this session by highlighting the need to be responsive to opportunities that may arise either in the centre or outside.

Activity 12: building-site discussion

1. Watch the video sequence on the building-site discussion, and in groups identify:

four opportunities for investigation

-
-
-
-

four opportunities for problem solving

-
-
-
-

2. Choose one opportunity for learning from each column and outline briefly how you would plan for each.

-
-

3. What other opportunities for learning do you see?

Activity 13: planning for individual needs

Time

- about 1 hour

Focus

- to highlight the importance of working as a team in planning for individual needs

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets
- flip-chart and pens.

Context

This staff discussion is taking place some time after the staff had identified that Jonathan was avoiding particular learning experiences and seemed to have no sense of purpose when he did choose to join a group activity.

They are discussing the progress he has made using the picture planning charts they have provided. Their discussions have been shared with Jonathan's mother (if you wish, you can see this discussion at the end of the section on reporting.)

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to draw attention to the value of sharing observations and planning as a team in order to meet the particular learning needs of individual children.

Before showing the video sequence you might wish to set the context for the staff discussion.

Show the video sequence.

Remind the staff that the emphasis for this activity is the value of planning as a team and working together to support individual needs.

Divide the staff into small groups and ask them to note down what they consider to be the key elements of the sequence.

Share their responses and note on a flip-chart.

Some of the elements might be:

- resources
- parental involvement
- choices
- observation
- valuing others comments
- relationships
- expectations
- Jonathan's response.

You may find that as part of the exploration the group begins to focus on the decisions taken by this staff team. It is important to stress that you do not have enough information about Jonathan to make any judgements and that the sequence is being used as a tool for working together as a team.

Now ask the staff to identify any other key elements of an effective approach to planning for individual needs.

Add these to the flip chart.

To conclude this activity you may wish to look at the list you have made and highlight the strengths/areas for development in your centre's approach to planning for individual needs.

As a follow-up activity you may wish as a team to take a closer look at a particular child in your centre.

59

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Activity 13: planning for individual needs

Watch the video sequence.

Now in pairs:

1. Make a note of the key elements of this discussion.

2. Now consider what might be the key elements of effective planning for individual needs.

3. Can you identify any elements that you might want to develop within your approach to planning for individual needs?

Activity 14: Wiggly Woo

Time

- about 45 minutes

Focus

- to highlight the ways in which children's interests and unexpected opportunities can be incorporated into planned learning experiences
- to emphasise the need to build on prior learning

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets
- flip-chart and pens

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to draw attention to the fact that being responsive to children's interests does not mean that we have to lose sight of our planned learning intentions.

Show the video extract once.

Draw attention to the nature of this planned learning activity as being:

- planned
- structured
- directed

and yet still allowing for responsive interaction with the children's interests.

Write the heading: 'What are the children learning?' at the top of a flip-chart sheet and brainstorm as a whole group.

This might include:

- learning to take turns
- working together
- using tools
- sharing resources
- paying attention to instructions
- persevering
- caring for the environment

Now in small groups or pairs ask the staff to identify what previous learning opportunities the children might have had in preparation for the planting and growing activity.

Bring the group back together and share the findings on a flip-chart. Some of their suggestions might include:

- looking at seeds
- growing bulbs
- visiting a park
- painting flowers.

The group members may have focused on the type of learning opportunities provided in the centre. Ask them to identify any additional features of learning that might have been a surprise to the adult, such as:

- knowing the song
- being able to work with a trowel.

Emphasise the importance of taking into account *all* that children know and not just what we *think* we have taught them.

Draw attention to the way in which the staff member responded to the children, letting them take the lead without losing sight of her planned learning intentions.

To conclude this activity, ask the group to identify ways in which this activity provides opportunities for extending children's learning.

Activity 14: Wiggly Woo

1. Watch the video sequence and brainstorm all that you think the children are learning from this planned activity.

2. Now in pairs identify the type of learning experiences the children might have had in preparation for this activity.

3. How might the adult plan to take this learning forward?

Moving Along

Aim

This is:

- to highlight the importance of effective communication between the pre-school centre and the primary school in ensuring continuity in learning.

Liaison is therefore important in the transfer of information about children's earlier experiences, including their strengths, difficulties and interests, so that primary school staff can plan for continued development and progression in learning. Meetings and pupil profiles built up over time in the pre-school setting can be valuable ways of achieving transfer of information. Primary staff have a responsibility to use this information in planning learning programmes that take account of children's prior learning and achievement.

A Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5, p. 56

64

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Activity 15: Moving Along – practitioners talking

Time

- about one hour

Focus

- to consider the value of pre-school and primary staff sharing information to ensure continuity and progression in learning
- to explore liaison arrangements between pre-school and primary and ways in which these might be strengthened

Preparation and resources

- photocopy enough activity sheets for the group
- copies of your centre's arrangements for transfer of information, staff visits, etc. (optional)
- copies of the Moving Along transcript

Context

In this section you will see a staff member from the pre-school setting in conversation with the P1 teacher. It is now six weeks into the first term and the discussion is based on the transition record that went with each child in June.

Leader's notes

The purpose of this activity is to consider the value of pre-school and primary staff sharing information to ensure continuity and progression in children's development and learning. It also offers an opportunity to explore liaison arrangements between pre-school and primary and ways in which these might be developed and strengthened.

Introduce the session by highlighting the importance of supporting learning at the transition to primary school. You may wish to refer to page 55 of the *Curriculum Framework for Children 3–5* to point up particular aspects of effective transition.

Describe the context for the video extract the group is about to see. Show the video section 'Moving Along'. Now hand out the activity sheet and ask the group members to work in pairs. Tell them they will have further opportunities to listen to the conversation. Give out the transcript of the conversation and show the video again.

Now ask the pairs to complete sections one and two of the activity sheet. Reassemble the group.

It will be important now to allow time for the group to identify some of the key transition issues. They may include:

- different contexts for learning
- staff/parent relationships
- expectations (of staff, parents and children)
- the number of centres involved in sharing information.

There might be a tendency for some members of the group to dwell on the difficulties of supporting learning at times of transition. Your challenge as a group leader is to emphasise the importance of sharing information for the child and to encourage the group to look for solutions, rather than dwelling on difficulties.

From this discussion you should now identify one or two key aspects of transition procedures that you want to develop in the context of your own policy and practice.

Activity 15: Moving Along – practitioners talking

In pairs:

1. Listen carefully to what the two practitioners are saying about each child. Note down what you find out about each child's development and learning in the first two boxes.

Pre-school staff member	P1 teacher	Impact on learning
Calvin		
Natasha		
Rhys		

2. How might the information that they have shared impact on continuity in learning for each child? Discuss this and complete the grid.

3. Take a closer look at your own procedures for sharing information and identify ways in which this kind of significant evidence might be included.

And in conclusion ...

In preparing these materials the writing team identified a whole range of issues that are highlighted throughout the video.

Within this publication it was not possible to include all their ideas but we have listed some suggestions for additional consideration.

- Guiding principles (*A Curriculum Framework for Children 3-5* p. 2)
- Gender issues
- Outdoor play
- Self assessment
- Peer assessment
- Preferred ways of learning
- Supporting individual needs
- Involving visiting staff in the assessment process
- Involving families in the centre
- Providing challenge for young learners
- Valuing others
- Self-esteem
- Ethos

You and your staff may have identified others.

You may wish to design your own activities based on the models provided and the suggestions outlined on page three in Support for Group Leaders.

If you wish to share any of these activities then contact Diane Alexander who will be able to publish your ideas on the *Early Years* website (www.svtc.org.uk/earlyears) where others can access it and feed back their comments to you.

Diane Alexander
Development Fellow – Early Education
Scottish CCC
Gardyne Road
Broughty Ferry
Dundee
DD5 1NY
Tel: 01382 443600
E-mail: dalexander@sccc.ac.uk

Appendix 1: Moving Along transcript

Moving Along: sharing information about Calvin

Conversation between early years practitioner and primary school teacher

P1 teacher *Calvin?*

Pre-school practitioner *Now, he was very aware of print when he was in the nursery. He was a child who could plan and organise his own time, he didn't need ...*

P1 teacher *Yes, I found that. He's very independent and with his reading he's picked up, his sight vocabulary has built up very quickly, he has about 7–8 words in his sight vocabulary already.*

Pre-school practitioner *Right!*

P1 teacher *And he's quite confident in reading words.*

Pre-school practitioner *Mum had actually brought him on a visit back to the nursery just to show us his uniform and what not, and she was actually talking about the phonics programme that you use and she's very happy with what you've been doing.*

P1 teacher *That's right, it's a new one this year.*

Pre-school practitioner *I would say Calvin, during group times at nursery, he was, his concentration was very good, he would listen and respond to what was going on and he was quite happy to talk within the group situation, to offer comment that sometimes in the nursery setting they're not always so happy to do, they would prefer to talk on a one-to-one. He is confident.*

P1 teacher *He is confident, in all areas, not just the language, he's confident with most things, with his numbers as well.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Moving Along: sharing information about Natasha

P1 teacher *Natasha, she was also another one.*

Pre-school practitioner *Yes.*

P1 teacher *Very quiet, very quiet.*

Pre-school practitioner *Not as confident, I would say that was one area where she lacked confidence.*

P1 teacher *Did she need adult support for things and look to adults for reassurance?*

Pre-school practitioner *Yes, quite often she needed the encouragement to try a new activity. She found it difficult planning her own time and organising herself at a task.*

P1 teacher *That's right. One step at a time.*

Pre-school practitioner *Yes, and she tended to wait until activities were quieter, she didn't like to go to a busy activity, where there were a lot of other children around.*

P1 teacher *Did she spend time observing before actually becoming involved in something?*

Pre-school practitioner *Yes, she was definitely one who would hold herself back and observe others before having a go.*

P1 teacher *Yes, we found that too with her. Did she mix well with other children?*

Pre-school practitioner *She had particular friends and she should interact with familiar adults, other than that she tended to keep herself to herself. It was something I was a bit concerned about when she was coming up to school because her one particular close friend was going into another school and I'd wondered if perhaps there would be any effect on her of splitting up the friendship.*

P1 teacher *I think she's managed with other children but it tends to be she holds back, she doesn't speak to adults so much and needs to be encouraged.*

Pre-school practitioner *I would say that in nursery yes, it was definitely familiar adults that she spoke to.*

Moving Along: sharing information about Rhys

P1 teacher *He's quite quick, he's picked up his reading, his print. He's aware of print and picks things up quite quickly, but tends to do things very fast.*

Pre-school practitioner *He was a confident boy who, I would say, tended to go towards familiar activities. He would return, continually, to the familiar. He preferred construction resources, for instance he had almost a fixation about vehicles and you would continually find him going to books about vehicles. If he was choosing a puzzle it had to have a vehicle on it, and although I'm saying he returned to familiar activities, his skills in all areas were generally good.*

P1 teacher *See, we don't have that problem with having them choosing activities, they have a number, so if he wanted to go to construction all the time he couldn't.*

Pre-school practitioner *Right.*

P1 teacher *So we don't pick up on these things as quickly as you would because he might only have construction once a week so it's not as obvious.*

Pre-school practitioner *Whereas in nursery it's open and he can choose to go wherever and he tended to return to the same activities.*

P1 teacher *So he could do that everyday.*

Appendix 2: video script

Principles

The early years of children's lives are ones of rapid growth and development. Children who begin their education in a supportive and challenging environment are likely to become confident and successful learners.

The challenge for us in promoting learning is to ensure that the educational experience we provide is of the highest quality and based on:

- the central importance of relationships
- the need for all children to feel included and have a sense of belonging
- an understanding of the many different ways in which children learn through investigation, first-hand experience, talk and play.

And at all times we need to ensure that we keep the best interests of children at heart.

Staff interaction/observation

When we take time to stand back and observe children's play we can gather important information about each child's development and learning.

These observations tell us what children can do and not just what we think they should have learned.

Through our day-to-day observations and interactions with children:

- we build up relationships of trust and respect
- we develop a better understanding of their progress in each key aspect of the curriculum
- we learn about their interests, motivations and preferred ways of learning
- we start to ask the kind of questions that encourage them to share their ideas and develop their thinking
- we decide when to engage with children in their play experiences and to extend and support their learning
- we decide when to observe their learning without taking part.

Observation may be focused on:

- what children choose to do
- the level of adult support they need
- who they play with – or talk to
- their absorption and involvement in play
- the different type of play experiences they choose.

Through interaction with children we gather evidence about whether our learning intentions for small groups or individuals have been achieved.

Our observations will tell us what specific action is needed to support – or extend – the child's learning.

At times it will be necessary to make notes from our observations.

The best time is often right on the spot.

These notes, however, should be used selectively to build up a picture of a child's achievements, interests and preferred ways of learning.

Recording

Some of the evidence from observation can be used to build up a record of children's achievements and progress over time. This record will provide a good basis for discussion with children, parents and staff.

Evidence may include:

- children's work
- notes made from observation
- notes from discussion
- photographs of children's work
- children's drawings and paintings.

Recording needs to be manageable, useful and selective.

Building up a folio for each child is an effective way of gathering evidence, and children need to be involved in this process.

Reporting

Effective reporting is vital in providing feedback on a child's development in learning. It will be most effective when it involves:

- children themselves
- their parents and families – both formally and informally
- all staff who are involved
- specialist staff – who may have particular insights in to aspects of children's learning
- colleagues in primary school.

Lots of informal reporting will take place throughout the year through:

- day-to-day discussions
- sharing resources with parents
- sharing information
- displaying photographs of children's work.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Parents need to be kept well informed about their child and about the activities at the centre that are helping their child to learn.

A formal report should emphasise the child's best achievement.

Different ways of sharing information, such as video, can help staff and parents plan next steps in learning.

It will also be important to share information with primary colleagues both in the nursery and in the primary school.

Planning

Effective planning is central to effective learning for children. It should be the key to making learning and teaching manageable ... and it should involve long- and short-term planning. It should take account of different (aspects of learning and) ways of learning, and different environments.

Long-term planning should provide for:

- a balance of learning opportunities across the curriculum
- an overview of learning ... and the areas of emphasis at particular times of the year
- special events that emerge throughout the year, such as birthdays.

Learning intentions should be clearly stated. They should indicate how staff will support learning, and the focus for observation and assessment should be clear.

The plan should evaluate how well the previous plan worked and set out areas for development within the next plan.

Short-term planning, however, needs to be flexible enough to take account of those unforeseen learning opportunities that can occur and which act as a stimulus for discussion and learning.

Balancing the need for careful planning with the interests of children can be challenging for us.

Planning is enhanced where there is partnership that can include:

- all staff, including visiting staff
- contributions from parents who can help with specific activities in a centre
- comments from parents about particular interests their children might have
- indeed, sometimes, the whole family.

And last, but not least, children, who have important contributions to make and will influence the planning process.

At the end of Learning is Magic:

- Supporting children's learning is challenging ... but it should always be magic!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Scottish
Consultative
Council *on the*
Curriculum

Gardyne Road
Broughty Ferry
Dundee DD5 1NY
Tel: 01382 443600
Fax: 01382 443645/6

E-mail: reception@scec.ac.uk
Web: www.scec.ac.uk

Price: £22.50 (VAT incl.)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE